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Book Reviews

Classical Echoes in Tennyson. By WILFRED P. MUSTARD. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904. Pp. xiv+164. \$1.25 net.

This little book, Vol. III of the Columbia University *Studies in English*, is in some ways delightful, in some disappointing. Every lover of Tennyson and classical literature feels how thoroughly steeped in classic lore the great Victorian laureate was. In this book Dr. Mustard has carefully gathered together the passages in Tennyson—sometimes no more than a single word—in which the English poet is indebted to the poets of Greece and Rome, and set them before us side by side with the Greek and Latin verses that inspired them. The store of poetic imagery is vast, and no one poet, whether Greek or Latin or English, ever held a monopoly of its most striking forms of expression. But the modern poet who has grown old, as Tennyson did, in close and constant intimacy with the bards of Greece and Italy, until his whole thinking has become assimilated to theirs and his spirit has become one with theirs, must not complain of the “hunters after remote resemblances and far-fetched analogies.” Dr. Mustard has shown his sane scholarship by judiciously avoiding the accusation of being such a hunter, and, for the most part, his parallels are safely drawn.

As he himself suggests, his readers will reject some of his parallels as imaginary borrowings—mere accidents of similarity. For example, “underneath another sun” is too easy a commonplace to be likely to be borrowed from Vergil’s equally commonplace *alio . . . sub sole* (p. 100); “quoted odes” is another phrase too readily applicable to a lecture on poetry to be in any wise dependent upon Horace’s *carmina culta* (p. 108). The Hyades are essentially “rainy”—their name, if correctly derived from *ἦω*, means nothing more or less—and Tennyson need be in no wise dependent upon Vergil’s *pluvias Hyades* for the collocation.

For the classical scholar who is working with Tennyson, Dr. Mustard has done signal service in classifying Tennyson’s classical allusions and adaptations, and arranging them under the poets whose lines are echoed. Homer, as was naturally to be expected, holds the first place in time as in weight of influence. After Homer follow the lyrists. Allusions to Theognis, the tragic poets, Empedocles, Plato, Callimachus, Moschus, Plutarch, and Arrian are bunched together in chapter 5.

Tennyson’s indebtedness to the singer of the field and fold, Theocritus, is sufficiently extensive to demand a whole chapter (3). His one item of indebtedness to Quintus Smyrnaeus is found in “The Death of Oenone;” but that one item is so large, and the late Greek poet to whom the debt is due is so little known,

that Dr. Mustard is justified in devoting a short chapter (4) entirely to him. Quintus, it seems, has not only supplied Tennyson with almost all the details of the English poem, but he has also furnished him with much of the poetic imagery and passion of his classically beautiful Oenone.

The author devotes almost as much space to Lucretius as to Homer. But Tennyson's borrowings from Lucretius are mainly confined to that one poem in which the English poet set himself consciously to reproduce the spirit of the philosopher-poet of Rome. He has analyzed his philosophy and composed it anew, like yet unlike the original in form and spirit. The "echoes" are, therefore, loud and clear, even though they are not so numerous as might under the circumstances be expected.

In the next three chapters (7-9) the author takes up in the same way Catullus, Vergil (whom he always spells *Virgil*), and Horace. Horace, we know, had a larger influence than any other Latin poet upon Tennyson's poetic style, and the list of parallel passages is long and interesting. The last chapter includes all sorts of Latin authors—elegists, satirists, historians, Christian fathers.

To the student of Tennyson who is not a classical scholar, the book is likely to prove a disappointment. To such a one it can be no more interesting, as consecutive reading, than the notes of a well-annotated edition of his English poet. It is made up almost entirely of short parallel passages and references, with scarcely a comment, or a critical comparison, or illuminating side-light.

While some of our classical "echoes" in Tennyson are very faint, and others wholly imaginary, still not all the certain echoes have yet been gathered. We miss in Dr. Mustard's book a quotation of *Odyssey* xi. 115, "men over-bold, who eat thy substance," or *Odyssey* i. 245 ff., "all who rule as princes in the isles . . . waste my house" (or a dozen other places) in connection with Tennyson's "Or else the island princes over-bold have eat our substance" ("Lotus-Eaters" vi). We wonder that "to live and lie reclined On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind ("Lotus-Eaters" viii) is not compared with Lucretius v. 82; vi. 58, and Horace *Satires* i. 5. 101, all quoted at p. 75. We are surprised that Psyche's babe "headed like a star" ("Princess" ii) did not recall Andromache's babe "like unto a beautiful star" (*Iliad* vi. 401); and with this might have been quoted Horace's *sidere pulchrior* (*Odes* iii. 9. 21).

Real errors, however, are strikingly wanting in the book. "The knights pleasure" (p. 108) is an easy misprint. But certain glaring inconsistencies of spelling will grate upon the sensibilities of the many to whom consistency is still a jewel; e. g., "Kypriis" (p. 58) but "Circe" (p. 13), "Helios" (p. 3) but "Battus" (p. 35), "Hephaistos" (p. 10) but "Simaetha" (p. 36), "Anacreontea" (p. 21) but "Mantineia" (p. 58), "Aigeus" (p. 125) but "Alcaeus" (p. 22) and "Oedipus" (p. 56).

The architecture of Professor Mustard's book deserves especial commendation. It is beautifully made.

W. M.